

VOL V

Chapter 1. OCI and President Johnson's New Administration -- 1964-65

Supporting the New President

Contrary to ~~some~~ expectations, the transition from the Kennedy to the Johnson administration was not especially easy for OCI, despite the fact that Mr. Johnson, as Vice President, had become familiar with OCI's publications and capabilities and did not require a formal introduction to them. For one thing, immediately upon taking office in November 1963, President Johnson had called on the heads of all departments and agencies to economize, and during most of 1964 OCI, like other offices in CIA, was busy making surveys and cutting expenditures. For another thing, President Johnson, like his predecessors, ~~was busy~~ <sup>preoccupied</sup> during his first six months in office with the reorganization of the White House staff and with domestic political problems. Thus, although OCI reportedly had won Vice President Johnson's approbation during the Cuban missile crisis, it was forced in early 1964 again to try to attract his attention without spending any money in so doing.

Beginning immediately after President Kennedy's assassination, <sup>Commenced</sup> ~~OCI began~~ to add a certain amount of background and explanatory material to the items in the ~~PICL~~ <sup>President's Intelligence Checklist</sup> on the assumption that President Johnson was probably not quite as fully informed on various situations as his predecessor had been at the time of his death. In addition, OCI began to use some events of marginal importance as pegs on which to provide the new President with succinct briefings designed eventually to cover most countries of the world. By 5 December 1963, however, both McGeorge Bundy and Bromley Smith in the White House indicated that the Checklist should return to its normal length, including as many or more items as previously, supplying negative as well as positive reporting, but keeping each item short. <sup>1/ (continued)</sup> The clear hint here was that the President already was sufficiently informed on most world situations to understand what the PICL had to tell him.

OCI's problems did not end here, however. By early January 1964, Gen. Clifton, who had been President Kennedy's military aide and who had been responsible for providing intelligence briefings to Mr. Kennedy, reported his belief, confirmed by McGeorge Bundy, that President Johnson would not at that time accept a daily intelligence briefing. <sup>Such as that contained in the PICL. 2/ (40)</sup> The President had indicated that he

see him he would rely on Bundy and Gen. Clifton to keep up with intelligence matters. Since the President tended without warning to ask these two men for the "latest intelligence", the Checklist had to continue publication.

OCI therefore continued to produce the Checklist, but on 9 January it delivered to Gen. Clifton two <sup>it had prepared</sup> copies of an experimental President's Intelligence Review, to be published twice a week and to contain analytical summaries of the last three to four days' events. <sup>3/ (no further)</sup> The next morning, Gen. Clifton reported that the experimental review had been shown to the President at breakfast, that "it had worked like a charm", and that the White House staff was very pleased with it. Gen. Clifton stated that OCI could henceforth deliver a Review twice a week. <sup>4/ (no further)</sup>

Possibly because of the hint that the President would not see the Checklist every day, and <sup>because of his desire to get to certain high level policy makers</sup> ~~being concerned as he stated in a letter to~~ <sup>The tightly held intelligence that could not be</sup> ~~McGeorge Bundy on 6 April 1964 that the crucial relationship between~~ <sup>printed in the Central Intelligence Bulletin</sup> ~~policy maker and intelligence analyst be strengthened,~~ DCI McCone obtained White House permission to extend the distribution of this journal beyond the few recipients who had seen it under the Kennedy administration <sup>(Sec. 5)</sup> (Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, McGeorge Bundy of the White House staff and Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). The new recipients included Messrs. Ball, Harriman, Johnson and Hughes in the State Department, Messrs. Cyrus Vance and William Bundy in the Department of Defense, Gen. Carroll of Gen. Taylor's staff, Secretary of the Treasury Dillon, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. <sup>5/ (no further)</sup>

By March, it was apparent to OCI that neither McGeorge Bundy nor Gen. Clifton was seeing <sup>Johnson</sup> ~~the~~ President as often as they had seen Mr. Kennedy and that Gen. Clifton had been assigned additional administrative and ceremonial duties because of the departure of the Naval and Air Force Aides from the President's staff. It was uncertain whether --or how often -- the PICL got to the President while he was in Washington, although he reportedly read it personally whenever he was out of town. Similarly, it was known that the biweekly Review <sup>certain White House staffers</sup> ~~reached Messrs. Moyer or Valenti~~, but there was no direct indication that the President <sup>still</sup> ~~saw~~ saw it or reacted to it in any way. <sup>6/ (no further)</sup> A source in the Department of Defense reported on good authority that the President read each issue of the

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 Review, but this was nonetheless second hand information. It gradually became apparent that the persons with whom OCI was in close touch no longer were in a position to know what the President liked or disliked or thought about the PICL. Thus, on 27 March 1964, [REDACTED] Acting AD/CI, reported to the DDI ~~DDI~~ that in the absence of the accustomed detailed Presidential reaction which OCI had enjoyed under Mr. Kennedy "we are groping in the dark, and may in fact be getting further and further away from the target.... Instead of changing Mr. Kennedy's staff, Mr. Johnson has inserted another layer of his own between them and himself.... We are therefore worse off than we would be if Mr. Kennedy had been voted out of office." *2/1/64* [REDACTED] pointed out the importance of knowing what the President wanted if OCI were to serve him effectively.

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 The situation simmered throughout the summer of 1964 without OCI getting any closer to the President. ~~In fact, OCI lost a little ground in this election~~ *did not ask CIA* ~~was, by not being called by the White House~~ to provide the world situation briefings which since 1952 *OCI* had either given directly to presidential candidates or had prepared for the DCI to present to them. Instead, President Johnson controlled from the White House the extensive briefings which actually were given to those candidates. *1964* In November, however, AD/CI Smith, in connection with instructions from the DCI to talk to Secretary of State Rusk regarding the security implications of the widened distribution of the President's Checklist, seized the opportunity to plead with his superiors for a new effort to reach the President directly. On 5 November, he pointed out that OCI had not adjusted to President Johnson's working habits. He noted that the President read the Review, which was delivered in the evening, and thought the PICL might also be read if delivered at the same time of day. He pointed out once more the lack of "feedback" from the White House because of the fact that those who received the PICL were not those who saw the President. He also suggested that late 1964 would be a good time to change the name, cover design, and format -- though not the substance -- of the PICL in order to get away from the Kennedy tradition and to give the new President the impression he was receiving a publication for himself. Smith pointed out that issuance of a new publication would provide a graceful way of cutting down the distribution list, which was already being attacked as too large for maximum security. *9/1/64*

Probably because the election of President Johnson in his own right  
~~in~~ November 1964 gave timely support to Smith's representations, the  
Checklist ceased publication on 30 November. It was replaced on 1 December  
 by a new publication called the President's Daily Brief (PDB). <sup>10/ (10 Dec 64)</sup> Though the  
 contents of the Brief remained essentially the same as that of the Checklist,  
 the cover and format were different and the Brief was issued late in the  
 afternoon instead of the early morning. At Secretary Rusk's request, the  
 official distribution was cut down once more to Mr. Bundy in the White House,  
 Secretary Rusk and Undersecretary George W. Ball in State, Secretary McNamara,  
~~and Assistant Secretary John T. McNaughton~~  
~~and~~ Undersecretary Vance in Defense, Treasury Secretary Dillon,  
 and Generals Wheeler and Carroll of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By 16 December,  
 the DCI had ordered that the Summary section of the CIWR be included as an  
 annex to each Friday's Brief to provide an additional weekly roundup of  
 important intelligence information. <sup>11/ (16 Dec 64)</sup>

The President's Intelligence Review was also restructured and renamed  
Highlights of the Week. This publication was shortlived, however, lasting  
 only from 18 December 1964 to 26 February 1965. It apparently was withdrawn  
 from circulation because, according to Bromley Smith of the White House staff,  
 the President could not be made to read too many publications and the material  
 in the Highlights seemed to duplicate that in the Current Intelligence Weekly  
Review. <sup>12/ (12 Jan 65)</sup>

The problem of reaching the President directly continued to plague OCI  
 well into 1965. As late as 19 May 1965, DDCI Richard Helms wrote to the <sup>DDI</sup>  
 that "We still have quite a problem at the White House getting material to the  
 President." <sup>13/ (19 May 65)</sup> However, during the Dominican crisis of May -- in which up to  
 22,000 U.S. troops were involved (see p. ) -- OCI finally caught and held  
 the President's attention. On 20 May, AD/CI Smith was able to report that "a  
 'greased channel' now exists, as far as we can tell, for the President's  
Brief and for our Dominican spot reports." <sup>14/ (20 May 65)</sup> He implicitly recognized the  
 larger problem by commenting that "Under present White House conditions,  
 keeping the DCI informed is probably the best service we can perform." By  
 25 May, however, when <sup>Bill</sup> ~~William~~ Moyers, the basic  
 problem seemed to be solved. ~~Bill~~ explained the importance of "feedback" and

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requested White House comments. Mr. Moyers urged OCI to report on a wide variety of diplomatic, military, and press items and to provide analysis of them. He said the President read the PDB "avidly" <sup>(See Figure 1D)</sup> as well as Dominican situation reports, but that he found the Central Intelligence Bulletin of little use. <sup>15/</sup> At about the same time, the DCI, acting on instructions from the President or Mr. Bundy, ordered OCI to send a copy of the PDB to Vice President Humphrey. (Copies for the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General were dropped when Messrs. Dillon and Robert Kennedy resigned.)

#### Current Intelligence Production

In regard to other current intelligence production, the new development for 1964 was the proliferation of publications on Vietnam. The situation in Vietnam had been growing steadily more complex ever since 1961, when President Kennedy began to increase the number of U.S. advisers there. Despite the presence of the advisers, the conflict had not been going well for the Saigon government, and the U.S. Government was having a hard time acquiring accurate, unbiased reporting on the state of affairs. By early 1964, Vietnam had become a critical problem for the United States, and OCI had for the first time to formalize its publications on that country.

From about mid-1963, because of unsettled conditions in South Vietnam, OCI had participated under the direction of [REDACTED] Assistant DD/I for Policy Support, in an informal intra-agency task force called the CIA Working Group. The members of this group included [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] of ONE, personnel from <sup>DDP</sup> ~~DDP~~, and occasional personnel from ORR. This task force published informal situation reports from time to time and contributed increasingly frequent items to the CIB and CIWR. In addition, as events gradually led up to the overthrow of President Diem on 1 November 1963, [REDACTED] <sup>began to</sup> publish an informal daily situation report on a Top Secret Codeword level for a very limited audience.

Much of the information in this report was heavily oriented toward policy recommendation, since nobody had any very good ideas as to what should be done about Vietnam, and OCI had been requested to produce any ideas its experts might have. The 11 September 1963 issue of this report was <sup>published</sup> ~~issued~~ as an 8-page CIA <sup>memorandum</sup> ~~report~~.